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National Foreign Assessment Center

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# Area Briefs

78 - 118

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LATIN AMERICA BRIEF AP LAB 78-118 FOR 1 AUGUST 1978.Y

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1. ARGENTINA.Y

[redacted] PRESIDENT VIDELA RETIRES FROM THE MILITARY JUNTA ON TUESDAY AND TURNS OVER COMMAND OF THE ARMY TO GENERAL ROBERTO VIOLA. THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HAS DESCRIBED THE MOVE AS A MAJOR STEP IN THE GRADUAL RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE; IT SEPARATES THE PRESIDENCY FROM THE JUNTA AND EXTENDS VIDELA'S TERM FOR THREE MORE YEARS.

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[redacted] DESPITE THE EASE WITH WHICH THE CHANGE HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT, THE STILL-UNDEFINED RELATIONSHIP OF THE PRESIDENCY TO THE JUNTA COULD CAUSE FUTURE TENSIONS. VIDELA WANTS TO BE FREE TO DECIDE MAJOR POLICY ISSUES THAT DO NOT DIRECTLY CONCERN THE ARMED FORCES; THE SERVICE CHIEFS, BACKED BY ULTRACONSERVATIVES WITHIN THE MILITARY, ARE INSISTING THAT THE JUNTA RETAIN BROAD VETO POWERS. [redacted]

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